

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 21, 2019

The Honorable Robert Lighthizer
United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Lighthizer:

I write to encourage the Office of the United States Trade Representative to provide clarity and a comprehensive explanation of the criteria and procedures used for parties seeking exclusions from tariffs subject to Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974.

As we have discussed, I believe that the Administration's broad-based tariffs have had a negative impact on American companies, farmers, and consumers. I strongly support the President's long-term goal of "zero tariffs, zero barriers" and believe we should continue working towards that end. The Administration is right to focus efforts on combating unfair trade practices by China, but while tariffs remain in place, there is a need to update and improve the current exclusion process and better inform businesses on how to respond appropriately and make the necessary adjustments.

Several Tennessee companies have shared with me their frustrations about the lack of transparency and understanding of the exclusion process. Many have altered supply chains, shifted production, and taken steps to absorb the impact of these tariffs as best they can. However, a clear explanation of the exclusion process remains critical for businesses to receive much-needed relief on the products they import that are subject to tariffs.

International trade is crucial to Tennessee's industries, and we should be careful not to discourage investment and economic growth as it will negatively affect many American businesses. Specifically, Tennessee's reliance on imports from China is higher than any other state, with 7.3% of the state's gross domestic product consisting of Chinese imports.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue, and I look forward to working with you further to reach our shared goal of "zero tariffs, zero barriers" for all Tennesseans and Americans.

Sincerely,



Lamar Alexander
United States Senator